

## Tumbulgum ban plastic bags

Peter Caton | 27th October 2010

THE Tweed riverside village of Tumbulgum, a popular fishing and boating destination, yesterday became the second official "plastic bag free community" in the shire and the third in NSW.

At an official Tweed Shire Council launch of the village's new status, Hannah Butterworth from the Ferryside General Store said going plastic bag free made sense for a village that was so close to the water.

"Local tourism relies on a healthy environment so reducing the amount of plastic leaving our shop is a long-term investment in our business," Ms Butterworth said.

Tweed Shire Greens Party councillor Katie Milne was on hand to congratulate the general store and other business people "for their proactive approach to a serious environmental issue".

"Retailers in Tumbulgum and the Tweed's other plastic bag free village Chillingham are showing great leadership in going plastic bag free," she said.

"Their actions mean a reduction of approximately 40,000 plastic check-out bags annually."

The council's role in helping village retailers go plastic bag free includes a one-off supply of reusable shopping bags that are sold in-store to cover the cost of the next order of bags.

A council spokeswoman said that by supplying the first batch of bags the council was helping retailers to overcome the initial cost of purchasing an alternative to single-use plastic check-out bags, which was a major hurdle in going plastic bag free.

"This village-by-village approach to plastic bag reduction was developed in response to a Council decision in October 2009 to investigate options for plastic bag reduction in the Tweed," she said.

"Interested retailers in the shire's other villages can contact Council for more information."

### **Plastic: from here to eternity**

- Australians used 3.9 billion plastic shopping bags in 2007
- Nearly half a million plastic bags are collected on Clean Up Australia Day each year
- It takes only four grocery shopping trips for an average Australian family to accumulate 60 plastic shopping bags
- Plastic bags are produced from polymers derived from petroleum. The amount of petroleum used to make a plastic bag would drive a car about 11 metres
- In 2005, Australians used 192 HDPE bags per capita. 14 per cent of HDPE plastic carry bags are returned to major supermarkets for recycling